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ABSTRACT

This document describes the 10 winners of the 1990 ABLE Award, which recognizes outstanding adult students in Pennsylvania adult basic and literacy education programs. The award, given for achievement based on learning excellence (ABLE), is presented by the Pennsylvania Division of Adult Basic and Literacy Education Programs. The winners are Raymond L. Bostic, Connelley Skill Learning Center, Allegheny County; Sharon Darby, CIU #10 Development Center for Adults, Clinton County; Bertha Beard, Erie Adult Learning Center, Erie County; Judy Baux, Scranton Council for Literacy Advance, Lackawanna County; Stanley Frazier, Eagleville Hospital, Montgomery County; Jann Marsteller, Northampton Community College, Northampton County; Carlos De Jesus, Community Learning Center, Valerie Lowery, Horizon House Rehabilitation Services, and Pocahontas Oberg, Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program, Philadelphia County; and Jean Lockett, Tunkhannock Area School District, Wyoming County. Each ABLE recipient's background and award-winning behavior are described in approximately two pages accompanied by a photograph of the recipient. The descriptions include recipients' rising to the challenge of a physical or mental handicap; prevailing despite poverty, abandonment, and abuse; and, sometimes, overcoming drug and alcohol dependency. (CML)

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1990.

RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

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Dear Reader:

In SUCCESS STORIES: Rise to the Challenge, you will meet ten outstanding Pennsylvania men and women who discovered that adult education programs provide the tools they need to master life's many challenges. Their stories affirm the ability of each adult to use education to rise above past difficulties and chart a successful course for the future.

For some, the challenge was surmounting a physical or mental handicap. Others prevailed despite poverty, abandonment and abuse. Many had to overcome a drug and alcohol dependency before they could get on with life. For all, the joy of learning, the delight of achievement and the rewards of success made the challenge worthwhile.

In the past three years, this administration and the General Assembly have increased funding for education by more than $1 billion which includes a more than $7 million increase for adult literacy programs. We are committed to improving the quality of life in our Commonwealth for our men and women and their families.

A challenge exists for all of us. Rise to this challenge by supporting adult literacy. Read these stories to friends who can't read and encourage them to join an adult education program. Call your local library or literacy council and volunteer to teach adult learners. They can train you for this challenge. With your help we can make Pennsylvania a Commonwealth where 'literacy for all' is not just a hope but a reality.

Sincerely,

Robert Casey

Robert P. Casey
Governor,
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

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Raymond L. Bostic

Allegheny County
Connelley Skill
Learning Center
Sponsor: Dr. Alfred Fascetti

Raymond Bostic is among many of the nation's homeless. When he was five years old, his father died of sickle cell anemia and his mother was left to raise him and his younger brother. The two anchors in his life were elementary school and his grandmother. Ray did well in the early grades; which made for a solid academic foundation. His father's mother was always there to lend a hand and some love. She was Ray's roots, his connection with the father he lost.

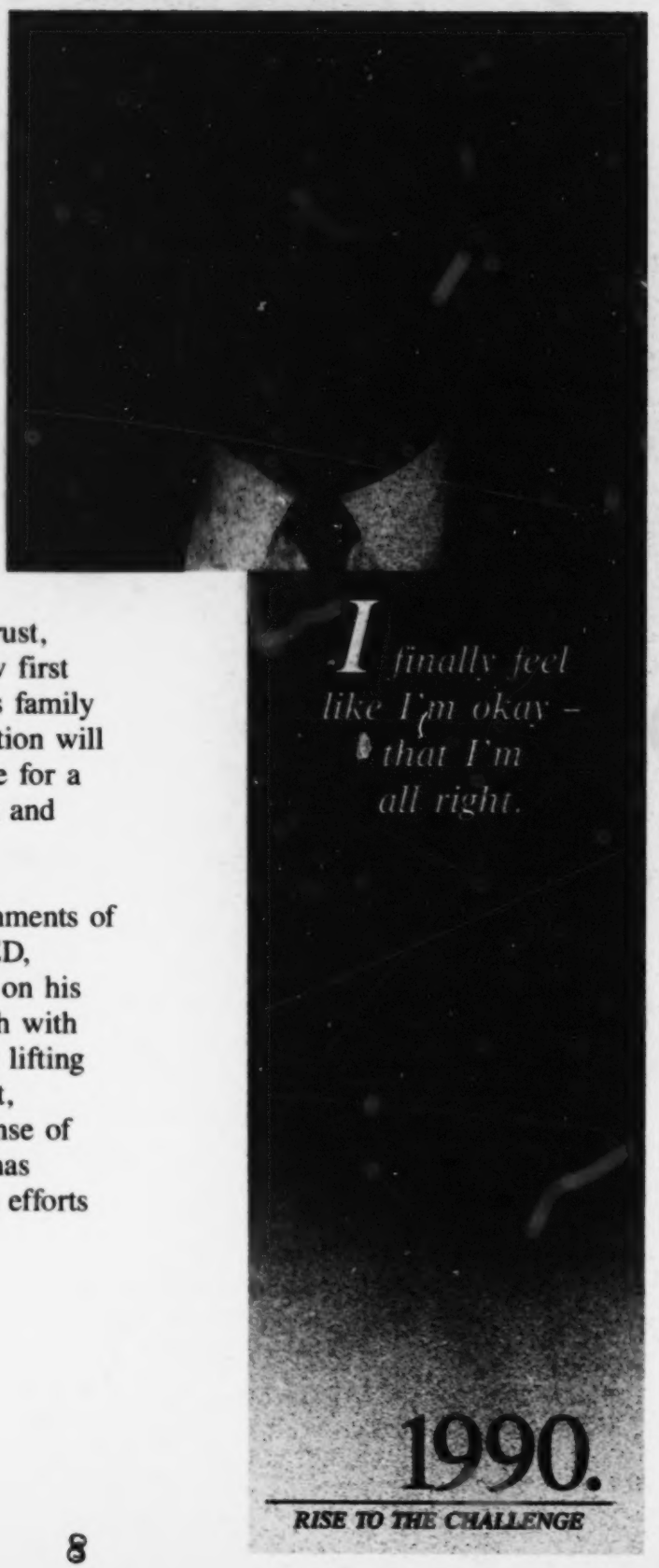
There was rivalry between Ray and his brother. Reggie was the good son, the prince charming. Ray was the streetwise, angry kid whom his mother browbeat to get him to shape up. When Ray was a teenager, his mother had to make a difficult decision; choosing between the man she loved or her son. Ray was not the chosen one. Since that time, he has felt detached from people and his world. He began to socialize with friends who drank and got high. This behavior led to five years of being institutionalized in various places. Anger was a way of life. He began to ignore people to keep out of trouble.

A suicide attempt about a year ago led Ray to the Light of Life Mission for the Homeless. They helped him get reconnected to life. In September 1989, Raymond Bostic entered the Connelley Skill Learning Center's GED classes and one month later passed the GED. He is currently tutoring five students in

math at Connelley and just interviewed for a job as a Security Monitor. This is the first time he has interviewed for a position when he was not addicted to chemical substances. He is confident and optimistic about his employment. Ray expects to start studying Drafting and Design at the Community College of Allegheny County.

During the past few months, Ray has been trying to re-establish relations with his mother and brother. He is the father of four children (a set of triplets plus one) and wants to give them the sense of trust, empathy and well-being that he is now first discovering. Along with education, his family is Ray's top priority. He says: "Education will give me everyday skills and knowledge for a strong foundation from which to work and build a future."

As he reflects on his accomplishments of the past few months, receiving his GED, tutoring other adult students, working on his primary relationships, keeping in touch with his physical self via sports and weight lifting and contributing to the homeless effort, Raymond Bostic feels and knows a sense of hope, which once eluded him. "Life has become fairly manageable through the efforts of others and myself."



Sharon Darby

Clinton County
CIU #10 Development Center for Adults
Sponsor: Debra Burrows

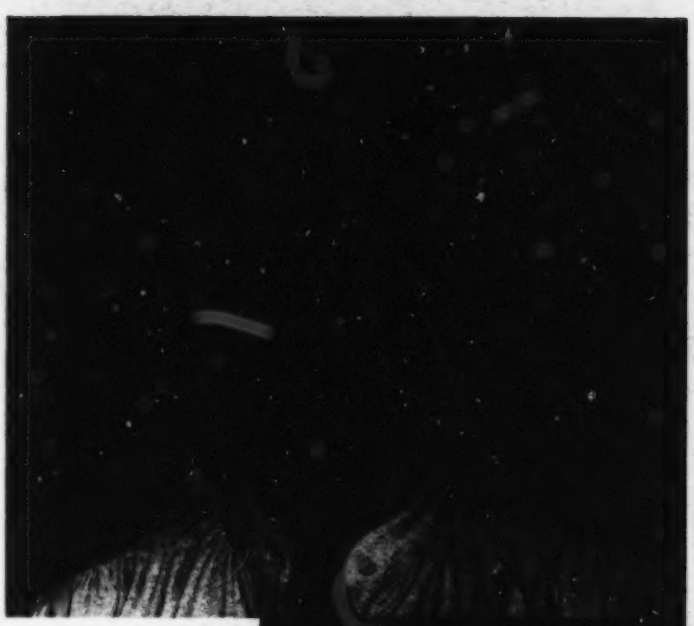
Although Sharon Darby loved learning, she left school in tenth grade. She was pregnant and in those days pregnant girls weren't allowed to stay in school. She married soon after and had four children by the time she was twenty-one. Despite her husband's abuse, Sharon worked hard to make her marriage work.

Abandoned by her mother at eight months old and raised by a grandmother and frequently absent father, she felt her life depended upon pleasing others. When her husband began to abuse the children, she got a divorce. She remarried only to find herself in a similar situation. A second divorce followed. Determined to free herself and her children from dependency and abuse, she got up the nerve to enroll in a GED class. Several months later she passed with high scores.

Sharon announced her success to her grandmother and father and told them she would be looking for a good job. Their reaction devastated her. A woman's place was at home with her children, she was told. Fearing the loss of their love and wanting to be a good mother, Sharon stayed home. She soon found herself in another abusive situation. After six years the man walked out on Sharon, taking everything, even the furniture. Sharon was forced to turn to welfare.

Despite these problems, when her granddaughter, Tiffany, was placed in foster care, Sharon adopted the child. Tiffany was hyperactive and unmanageable. Sharon was afraid she was mentally and emotionally handicapped. To add to it all, the furnace broke down. In January 1988 Sharon suffered a breakdown. A mental health counselor

suggested she brush up on her basic skills at the CIU #10 Development Center for Adults. At age 41, Sharon enrolled in GED classes and the REACH program for single parents and homemakers. She looked far older than her years, walked hunched over with her head down, rarely made eye contact, spoke only when spoken to and seemed defeated and without hope.



Today, Sharon is in her second year of the Machinist General Certification Program at the PA College of Technology. She has a 3.5 grade average and will graduate in May 1991. She has applied for membership in the Society of Mechanical Engineers and will soon interview with IBM. She plans to work in Computer Numerical Control, a specialty field with a minimum starting salary of $10 per hour.

Knowing that I'm capable of learning has been fantastic.

It wasn't easy. The technical math courses required are tough and Sharon brings her homework to GED class. She must commute over sixty miles round trip each day and arrange for child care for her granddaughter, who was diagnosed as having Petite Mal Syndrome and placed on controlling medication. She must find time to study, cook meals and clean the house. Being the only woman in the machinist program, there were prejudices to overcome and challenges, like trying to find steel-toed boots in a women's size six. Sharon still finds time to make presentations to students and legislators as a member of the GED alumni association. There is a light in her eyes and a vitality about her. By sharing her challenges and victories, she is an inspiration to all and the Development Center's best recruiting tool.

1990.

RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

Bertha Beard

Erie County
Erie Learning Center
Sponsors: Joseph Mando and Daniel Tempestini

For Bertha Beard, it all began with the GED. After leaving school in seventh grade to work, marry, and raise her eight children, Bertha finally had an opportunity to continue her education at the Erie Adult Learning Center. In 1978, she began ABE classes. It was not easy. Her youngest child was still in diapers. Bertha secured day care for him by volunteering her time after school hours at a day care center. After two long years, she earned her GED in December 1979. Finally, she had her diploma and she had gained something equally important, self esteem and confidence.

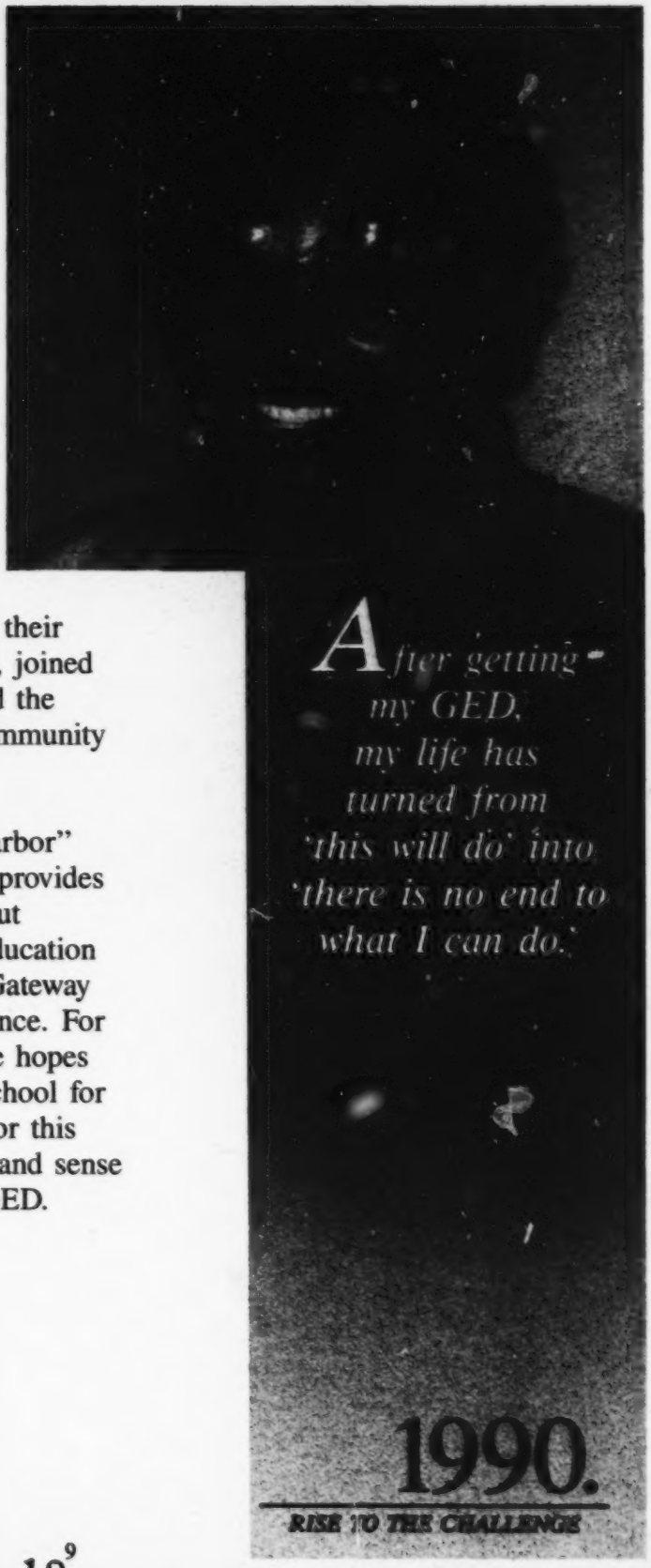
The teachers at the Booker T. Washington day care center were impressed by Bertha's ability and encouraged her to pursue a career with the Head-Start program. Starting as a substitute, she worked her way up to be an assistant teacher. At forty-eight, she had other dreams that would take her far beyond Head Start.

Bertha Beard always had a desire to venture into real estate. Her religious faith and sense of family led her to purchase a vacant church and start her own parish, the Blessed Hope Seventh Day Christian Church. Again, it was not easy, but her faith, determination and family support carried her through. With their help, she developed a day care center at the church which provides services for about thirty children daily. During this time, she continued

her education by taking courses in Early Childhood Development at Edinboro University.

Next, Bertha saw the need for good clean activities for the children in the poverty areas of Erie. With the purchase of a summer camp in the country, she initiated a summer day-camp program for neighborhood children to keep them out of crime infested streets and give them a positive alternative. Her next project was a community center located in the midst of the high crime and drug area. With the help of a donated dwelling, Bertha and her family, using their own resources and strong faith in God, joined two adjacent houses together, renovated the structures and opened the Gateway Community Center.

This center is used as a "safe harbor" for the neighborhood children. Bertha provides a site for homework tutoring, Girl Scout meetings, fellowship and adult basic education classes. Through her persistence, the Gateway Community Center is making a difference. For Bertha, the dreams continue. Next, she hopes to open her own school, a Christian school for all children, to help her community. For this woman of strong faith, determination, and sense of community, it all started with her GED.



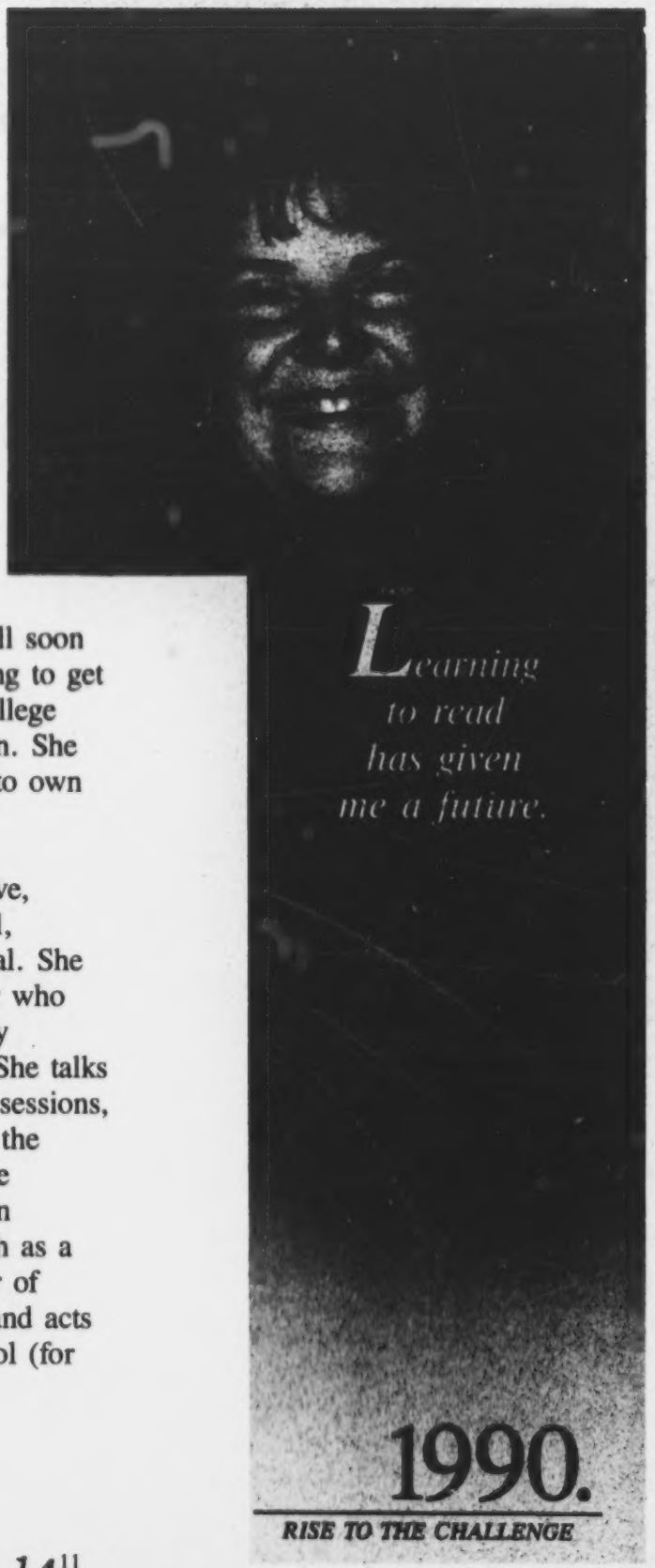
Judy Baux

Lackawanna County
Scranton Council for Literacy Advance
Sponsor: Diana Statsman

Like many learning disabled students, Judy Baux dropped out of school in tenth grade because she felt she was not learning anything. At fourteen, she began abusing alcohol. She became pregnant at fifteen, married at sixteen and had a child six months later. Her divorce after two years of marriage was followed by a five-year marriage to an abusive husband whom she supported by working at a local textile mill. A year after divorcing her second husband, Judy married again. Four weeks after the birth of her twin boys, she went back to work in the textile mill, often working 12-hour shifts seven days a week while her husband worked the opposite shift. Due to drug and alcohol abuse, they were over $60,000 in debt. Then Judy had a severe car accident and was out of work without pay for six months. At the end of her convalescence, she spent thirty days in an alcohol rehabilitation center. That was four years ago. Both she and her husband quit on the same day and have remained sober ever since.

Deciding to get their life in order, the couple declared bankruptcy and began marriage, drug and alcohol counseling. Judy received private help from the DePaul School for dyslexics, where she learned how to study. In November 1987, when she began studying with a SCOLA (Scranton Council for Literacy Advance) tutor, she could write her name, address, the alphabet and little more. She was also enrolled in a Nurses Assistant training program at Allied Services for the Handicapped. Allied was very supportive, working with the literacy program throughout her on-the-job-training to prepare her for the nursing assistant test. On the final exam, she received one of the highest scores ever achieved at Allied.

Judy's husband found training, then work as a truck driver. Although this job took him away two or three days a week leaving her with all the responsibilities of her job, family and home, Judy continued to meet with her tutor. In December 1988, a car crashed into her car while she was stopped at a red light. She was out of work for six months and could no longer be a nurse's aide because of her injuries. Then Allied gave her a new position as a clerical aide because they valued her determination, excellent job performance and the fact that she was still studying with a tutor. Judy will soon begin pre-GED materials and is planning to get her GED. She expects to enroll in a college course in Small Business Administration. She continues to work at Allied, but plans to own and operate her own business one day.



Judy has changed from a defensive, brusque, unhappy person to a delightful, outgoing, energetic and caring individual. She is an articulate and enthusiastic speaker who was featured with her tutor on a weekly television program about volunteering. She talks with new trainees during tutor training sessions, helps to recruit students and publicizes the literacy program. She is president of the Dyslexic Support Group of Northeastern Pennsylvania and involved in her church as a Sunday School teacher and the Director of Drama. She is also active in the PTA and acts as a spokesperson for the DePaul School (for dyslexics) in Scranton.

Stanley Frazier

Montgomery County
Eagleville Hospital
Sponsor: Kathleen Marks

Stanley Frazier bears many physical and mental scars from his childhood. He never knew his father and, at age eight, witnessed the murder of his mother. Stanley moved in with his grandparents and there he grew up amidst gangs and gang warfare. At eleven years of age, he started abusing alcohol; then went on to heroin and cocaine. He had his first contact with the law by fourteen and was in the House of Corrections at sixteen. Stanley left his grandparents' home at seventeen and by the time he was twenty, he had been incarcerated twice.

Stanley's life of addiction continued despite the fact that he had a wife and family. In January of 1987, he lost the love and support of that family when he took the money his wife saved for bills and sold their TV for drugs. At age 38, Stanley was friendless and living in a shelter for the homeless. That year, through the intervention of the shelter, Stanley Frazier entered Eagleville Rehabilitation Center and was given the opportunity to make changes, to build a new life, to be a success.

Stanley's opportunities included more than therapy sessions. At Eagleville, he was brought back to good physical condition, given glasses instead of the magnifying glass he was using, and sent to speech classes. The furthest he had gone in school was ninth grade and the longest he had held a job was seven months. Testing revealed his intellectual ability had been stunted. Stanley started at the beginning and learned to subtract, tackle long division and budget money. His reading progressed from fourth grade level in April 1987 to sixth in June and seventh in August.

Stanley Frazier learned how to find a job and keep it, how to fill out an application and what to do with a paycheck when he got one. He has been working at the same job for two years now. He gets up at 5:00 a.m. to arrive at work at 8:00 and doesn't get home until 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. When he was hospitalized last spring for multiple sclerosis (now in remission), his boss held Stanley's job for him, saying: "He's the best maintenance man I've had."

Stanley's speech has improved. He volunteered to speak at an education seminar, encouraging his peers to work hard in school. He learned to use a dictionary and to write letters. He corresponded with his family, making overtures to right many wrongs and has now regained their love and support. His five children are still at home. Three of them are still in school. Stanley tries to instill in them the need for education. He understands what he missed.

Going back to school and learning to read made me realize there are so many things in life I'd like to do and learn.

Everything Stanley does educationally has been an effort but he does not give up. He corresponds with a friend in prison, trying to give back what he learned. For two years he has corresponded with his tutor, Mary. Theirs is a firm friendship. Stanley's support system is working well. He has learned to look ahead, be positive and give life his best shot. Those of us who have watched him learn have learned as well. We've learned how to measure success.

Jann Marsteller

Northampton County
Northampton Community College

Sponsor: Maureen Cort

As a child, Jann Marsteller performed well in public school despite having to deal with an alcoholic father. Her problems began at sixteen when her mother moved to Florida and took Jann with her. Determined to earn enough money to graduate with her friends "back home" in Easton, Jann took a job as a secretary. The relocation didn't work out and one year later the family returned to Pennsylvania. They settled in a home one block outside Jann's former school district. Jann dropped out in the middle of her senior year when school authorities insisted that she attend high school in her residential district. She now realizes her "stubbornness" was a grave mistake. If she had graduated, her mother would have helped her through college.

Jann is now a single parent and the sole support of five children: two-year-old twins, a six-year old girl and a fifteen and sixteen-year-old boy and girl from her first marriage. Her first marriage failed when her husband, who took drugs, began to verbally and physically abuse his family. She eventually remarried, hoping this husband would provide the kind of life she sought. When her second husband turned to alcohol and became abusive, she fled again to protect her children.

She joined her sister in Las Vegas, bought a car and began a cleaning service. Her car broke down and she bought a bicycle. Jann suffered sunstroke from continued exposure to the heat while riding her bike back and forth to work. Her sister, whom she relied upon for support and strength, revealed herself as a compulsive gambler. Once again, Jann moved back to Easton. After fourteen months and five different residences, she and her family now reside at a shelter for the homeless.

As a single mother on welfare, Jann was eligible for the SPOC (Single Point of Contact) program. She enrolled in a decision-making class at the Kurtz Training Center, then, in the fall of 1988, entered a workplace literacy class at Northampton Community College. Her attendance was perfect though she was occasionally late for class. With the twins in tow, she had to take a bus, walk three blocks to the day care center, then return and and get another bus to take her to class. After passing the GED, Jann applied for and received a Pell grant. She is currently enrolled in the Cognitive Retraining Program at Northampton. Upon receiving her associate degree, she hopes to become a member of the shock/trauma unit at a hospital. Determined to get off welfare, she intends to work while she continues school part time to earn a Bachelor's Degree.

If you believe in yourself, you can turn your dreams into a reality.

Jann Marsteller's problems are not completely behind her. She is worried about her teenage son's poor attendance at school and fears that her 16-year-old daughter is beginning to experiment with drugs. She is attending counseling sessions with her through AFT - Adolescents and Families Together. Jann also spends time reaching out to others. She was elected to the Student Senate at her college, and was chosen to address a statewide Private Industry Council meeting as the model adult student who has taken advantage of programs provided by the state. She has been a supporter and promoter of adult education, helping friends at the Homeless Shelter enroll in the program. She realizes an education is essential if one is going to be a self-supporting citizen.

1990.

RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

Carlos DeJesus

Philadelphia County Community Learning Center

Sponsor: Jean Fleschute

Despite special help in reading and math, Carlos DeJesus had difficulty learning adequate academic skills in school. Nevertheless, he was pushed through the system. While he was growing up Carlos was exposed to alcoholism in his family and neighborhood. Unable to achieve satisfaction through success in school, he reached out to alcohol. In ninth grade, wracked with feelings of poor self-esteem and lured by the money he could make at his uncle's street vending business, he dropped out.

Ten years later, Carlos was fed up with life. His abuse of alcohol had led him to a dependency on drugs. Reluctantly, he became involved with a church youth organization and slowly, his life began to turn around. He became more and more involved with his church, gave up drugs and with the help of church friends, started his own part-time upholstery business.

In the spring of 1987, Carlos began to notice television commercials advertising the Mayor's Commission on Literacy. After much hesitation, he took the risk and called the literacy hotline. Soon he was taking classes at the Community Learning Center. One of the main factors that influenced this decision was the difficulty he was having teaching Sunday School. Attending class created problems for Carlos. He had to give up time from his busy upholstery business. He had to confess to his friends and family that he was going to school, that he lacked good reading and math skills. Despite the pressure of his work, he stayed with the program and found time to study outside of class.

For the first time, Carlos found learning fun and exciting. He experienced the feeling of success in school. Once he had achieved his personal goal of learning to read and write and handle work-related math problems, he decided to go for his GED. After several months of hard work, he successfully completed the test. Although Carlos no longer goes to class, he visits the program, motivating students by relating his own successes and giving encouragement. He was a guest speaker at the program's graduation ceremony and invited current students to call on him for support. Some have.

Having the Lord come into my life was the start for me. Getting my GED was like being born again.

1990.

RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

Carlos is currently working on improving his business. He hopes to move to a larger building soon, broaden his sales area and eventually earn a college degree in business administration. In the meantime, he has been attending seminars on topics such as business growth and development and money management.

Since getting his GED, Carlos has married and will soon be a father. He remains active in his church, teaching Sunday School and leading a youth organization. He believes that almost anything is attainable and that having a better education can improve people's lives. He sees himself as testimony to these ideas and he shares his feelings with friends and fellow churchgoers. He works hard to inspire and motivate others to return to school and be all they can be.

Valerie Lowery

Philadelphia County
Horizon House
Rehabilitation Services
Sponsor: J. E. Howard

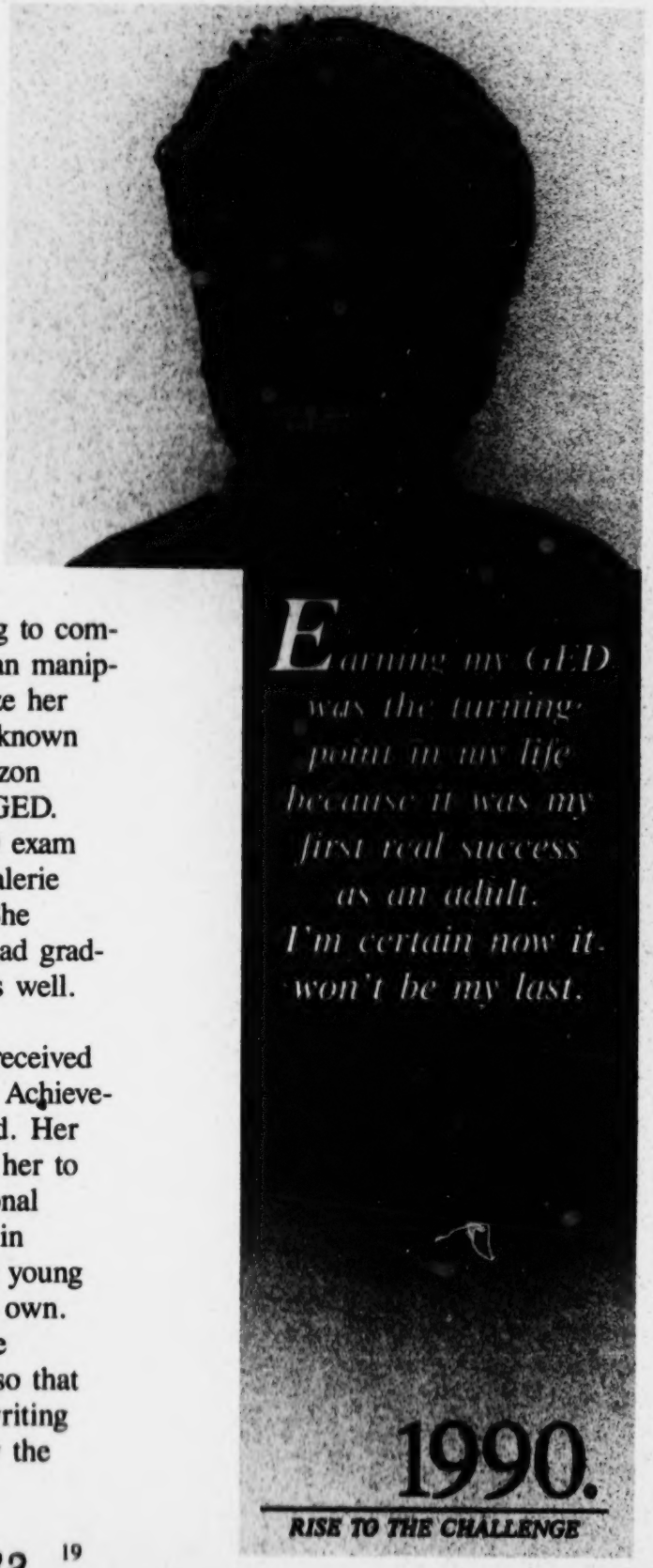
Valerie Lowery's plunge into a life of drug and alcohol abuse began at the age of fifteen when her father, a widower, abandoned his two daughters. Valerie turned to drugs and getting high soon seemed more important than anything else. She quarreled with the aunt and uncle who had taken her in and moved in with younger relatives who were themselves heavy drug abusers. Expelled from school, Valerie entered a second high school which was nothing more than a place to hang out, get high and even sell drugs. She dropped out in eleventh grade at seventeen years of age.

To support herself she took a job as a cashier at a natural food store and despite her continuing drug abuse became an assistant manager. At nineteen, she married a young man who was in the military and her next four years were spent living on military bases in the U.S. and abroad. Her substance abuse not only continued but was compounded by heavy drinking.

Upon her return home after her husband's discharge, Valerie was rehired by her former employers, but this time as a store manager. She was the sole support of the family as her husband, who was a heavy substance abuser, was unable to hold a job. He physically abused her and her first pregnancy ended in a miscarriage. Her second pregnancy was marked by a series of long illnesses which resulted in the loss of her job. A year later, still abused by her husband, Valerie dropped off her infant daughter with her mother-in-law and began to live in the streets. During her six months on the street, Valerie says she did "whatever it took to survive."

A childhood friend who has followed

Valerie's whereabouts begged her to come to live with her and her family. While in her friend's care, Valerie was persuaded to seek out her father and ask him for help. He convinced her to enter the Horizon House Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Program. After only two weeks in the program, she was discharged for getting high in the residence and had to go through a waiting period till she was re-admitted. This time she made it, working hard for the next seven months to overcome her addiction.


Earning my GED was the turning point in my life because it was my first real success as an adult. I'm certain now it won't be my last.
1990.
RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

Valerie's first big step was learning to communicate with and trust people rather than manipulate them. This enabled her to verbalize her deeply rooted fear of failure and the unknown consequences of success. While at Horizon House, she began working toward her GED. Despite failing to show up for the GED exam because she was overcome with fear, Valerie rallied and took the test in June 1989. She passed and by the end of the summer had graduated from the rehabilitation program as well.

In August 1989, Valerie Lowery received Horizon House's Outstanding Academic Achievement, Leadership and Attendance award. Her desire to reach out and help others led her to enroll in Horizon House's Paraprofessional Training Program. After she graduates in February 1990, she wants to work with young women with experiences similar to her own. She has applied to a community college because she wants to become a writer so that "I can share my experiences through writing and letting people who need help know the miracle is possible for them too."

Pocahontas Oberg

Phi delphia County
Lutheran Settlement House
Women's Program
Sponsor: Carol Goertzel

Pocahontas Oberg was born in 1929 on an Indian reservation in Virginia. A descendant of the famous Pocahontas, she was the fourth of six children of whom only three lived into adulthood. Pocahontas attended a one-room school on the reservation until her parents separated. Then she went live with an aunt. In 1940 her aunt moved to Philadelphia and Pocahontas was placed in public school. In 1942, she developed rheumatic fever and, because of complications, underwent surgery on her leg which caused her to use crutches and a cane for the rest of her life. Pocahontas was sick for a long time. She missed so many days she fell behind in school and left at the end of ninth grade.

In 1947, at the age of 18, she married her first husband, over the objections of both families. They had eight children, seven boys and one girl. She and her husband separated many times during the marriage and after the birth of her youngest child, she divorced him and returned to the reservation in Virginia to live with her father and help him with their farm. When she returned to Philadelphia in 1974, Pocahontas went to work at Sears where she met her second husband, Mike Oberg. They were married in 1976. After a series of miscarriages, she realized she would not be having any more children, so she found work as a waitress.

Pocahontas has been active in Native American groups since the 1970s. In 1982, when she became a member of the Board of Directors of the United American Indians of the Delaware Valley, the executive director referred her to reading classes at the Lutheran

Settlement House Women's Program. She has attended classes ever since, improving her reading, writing and math skills. In 1986, she suffered a heart attack and had to stay home a semester to recover. In 1987, her doctors discovered that she had pernicious anemia, which is fatal, and her oldest son died. Once again, Pocahontas took time off from school but returned with renewed energy to continue studying for the GED. She has begun the testing and now has 216 points toward the 225 needed to pass.

I was frightened when I started, but the Women's Program staff became 'my big family'. I started tutoring to give back some of what they gave to me.

In 1988, Pocahontas participated in tutor training and began working with a mentally handicapped man who wanted to learn to read. She meets with him weekly to teach him basic words. She has been constant, consistent and active in her insistence that Native Americans be acknowledged and recognized as a salient part of the community. She is also active in the South Free Will Native American Baptist Church and has served on several boards.

Pocahontas has watched her children become successful. One of her sons is an attorney for the Chippewa tribe; another is a teacher; one works in the Post Office and another, in a restaurant. She is an inspiration to everyone who sees her coming to class by bus with her cane and her book bag. She has taught students and staff at the literacy center not only about Native American culture, values and history but about human courage and determination.

1990.

RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

Jean M. Lockett

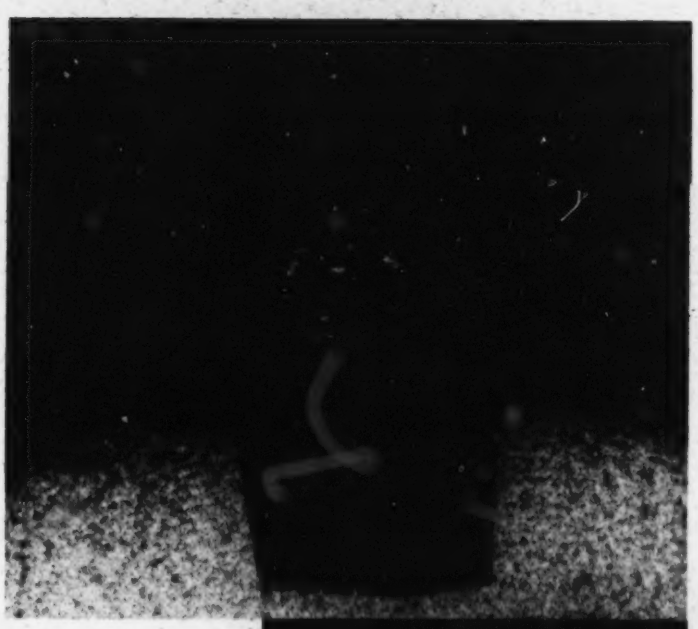
Wyoming County
Tunkhannock Area School District
Sponsor: Terri O'Dea

At age thirteen when Jean Lockett was in seventh grade, her parents became ill and Jean left school to go to work. Since neither parent valued education, she was not encouraged to return to school when they recovered. Jean married at sixteen, glad to escape a strict home where corporal punishment was practiced, only to find herself in a similar situation. Her husband was an alcoholic who abused his wife and children. A physical attack by him caused her to lose a baby in her eighth month; another baby was stillborn. For twenty-seven years Jean endured a marriage that was a "living hell" because she was raised to believe that it was her "cross to bear."

While her four children were growing up, Jean Lockett worked as a waitress and in a factory. Wanting to get off Public Assistance, she considered attending GED classes but her husband would not permit it. As the children grew older, she was ashamed to tell them she did not graduate from high school. It became more and more difficult to encourage them to continue their education when she did not complete hers. On July 11, 1985, her husband was electrocuted when the dump truck he was driving came in contact with a low electrical wire. Jean was suddenly a forty-three year old widow with four children; ages 22, 17, 15 and 12. Realizing she was solely responsible for her own and her childrens' future, she enrolled in the Tunkhannock Area School District GED class and made it her first priority.

Jean would drop off her son at work, then go to class. When class was over, she would sit in the parking lot and study until his shift was done, sometimes till 1:00 or 2:00 am. Though she had been out of school for

thirty years and was taking daily doses of prescribed medication for hypertension, arthritis and a sleep disorder, she passed the GED on her first attempt. She completed a secretarial course in January 1987, one year after passing the GED. She received a $100 scholarship toward an accounting and bookkeeping course which she also completed in less than a year.



Problems with her children have increased her hypertension. Her daughter married an abusive husband and cut herself off from her family for a while. Her oldest son refused to continue employment and became so abusive she had to refuse to allow him to live at home. Her youngest son was recently diagnosed as having a brain impairment, probably as a result of the physical abuse of his father. Not all of Jean's life experiences have been negative. In 1987, she married a man who is caring, loving and kind. He is proud of her accomplishments and encourages her to pursue her dreams. His first birthday present to her after they were married was a high school ring.

Jean is a certified Red Cross instructor, a member of the local ambulance association and volunteer fire company. For years, she was chairperson of the fire company's three-day bazaar. This concern for others was exhibited in class where her cheerful attitude and personal example encouraged younger students. She continues to encourage high school students to stay in school. She is extremely pleased that her daughter Donna is planned to attend college.

1990 OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENTS

Left to right, front row; *J. Marsteller, V. Lowery, P. Oberg, J. Lockett, S. Darby.*
Left to right, back row; *C. DeJesus, J. Baux, S. Frazier, B. Beard, R. Bostic.*

Sherry Royce, Project Director and Editor
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SUCCESS STORIES: Rise to the Challenge
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